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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: RICE'S BEIJING TRIP

Summary: Coverage of U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's visit to Beijing by the major Taipei dailies March 21 focused on Rice's meetings with Chinese President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao Sunday in which she called upon China to adopt actions to reduce cross-Strait tensions. The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" ran a banner headline in its front page that read, "Rice urges China to peacefully resolve the Taiwan issue." A page-two story of Taiwan's largest daily, the pro-independence "Liberty Times," and a page-three story of the centrist "China Times," both included in their sub-headlines that "Rice believes peaceful resolution to the Taiwan issue meets the U.S. interests." The pro-unification "United Daily News," however, points out in a page-two story that during the meeting with Hu and Wen, it was noteworthy that Rice did mention Washington's consistent position that it does not support Taiwan independence (or even opposes it). A "United Daily News" news analysis on page two headlined: "The United States' failure to mention [its position on] anti-Taiwan independence evidently shows that it still has doubts about the Anti-Secession Law." A separate news analysis written by "United Daily News" Washington correspondent Vincent Chang said Taipei is very concerned about Washington's future policy direction. If Rice fails to openly oppose the Anti-Secession Law, the article said, Taiwan's freedom to make its own choices with regard to its future will be greatly reduced. A limited-circulation, pro-independence English-language "Taiwan News," on the other hand, suggested in its editorial that the Bush administration and Rice take into account the Taiwan people's objections to the Anti-Secession Law and the firm and responsible reaction by President Chen and the DPP administration to Beijing's one-sided attempt to introduce undemocratic and non-peaceful means to sabotage cross-strait peace and undermine Taiwan's democracy. End summary.

A) "To Set the Tune on the Anti-Secession Law, Rice Has a Standard Answer in Her Pocket. Taipei Is Concerned about [Washington's] Future Policy Direction. If Rice Does Not Openly Oppose [the Anti-Secession Law], Taiwan's [Freedom] to Make Its Own Choices Will Be Greatly Reduced"

Washington correspondent Vincent Chang commented in the conservative, pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 600,000] (3/21):

". From the many remarks made [by Washington] prior to [U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza] Rice's visit to Beijing, it is obvious that if Taipei fails to get Rice in Beijing to 'at least' openly define the Anti-Secession Law as 'a move that alters the status quo of the Taiwan Strait,' or to get Washington [to say openly that it] 'opposes' the law, the Anti-Secession Law might become part of the 'status quo' of the Taiwan Strait in the future. Should that be the case, Taiwan's alternatives to remain flexible in making its own choices [with regard to its future] will also be greatly reduced.

"Rice's talks in Tokyo with regard to cross-Strait relations and the Anti-Secession Law could be combined into an intriguing syllogism: 'Neither Taiwan nor China can unilaterally resolve the Taiwan issue. The United States is opposed to any behavior or action by either side of the Taiwan Strait to unilaterally change the status quo. Any unilateral move to escalate tensions [in the Taiwan Strait] is not helpful [to resolve the cross-Strait disputes].'

"The U.S. position could be summarized using this syllogism starting from the time when the draft Anti-Secession Law was raised until the time it was passed. However, this syllogism is not precise at all. It is not precise [in the way] whether the subject talked about in the syllogism refers to the Anti-Secession

Law; it is not precise whether the law can be defined as 'a move that unilaterally changes the status quo;' and it is not precise whether the United States is 'opposed' to the law. .

"The biggest predicament and dilemma that Washington encounters in the face of the Anti-Secession Law and the main reason why it cannot totally agree with Taipei [as to how to react to the law] is that even though the United States is not pleased with some of the articles in the Anti-Secession Law, Washington, based on the position of its existed China policy, cannot say that it totally disagree with all the contents in the law. ."

"But if it is sure that following Rice's visit to Beijing, Washington decides to use the syllogism to set a tune [on the Anti-Secession Law], it is definite that Taipei, which is now in an unfavorable position, will not be yielded willingly. But if Taipei decides to adopt more follow-up counteractions, including the mass rally scheduled for March 26, what will be the bottom lines of Washington and Beijing and how much can they tolerate? How many warnings will Taipei get from Washington and how strong will they be? All these above will affect the future interactions between Washington, Taipei and Beijing."

B) "Making the Best Use of Taiwan's Leverage"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [20,000] editorialized (3/21):

". Rice said that in her meetings in Beijing this week, she will reiterate the Bush administration's complaint that the anti-secession law is not 'helpful' in reducing cross-strait tensions because Washington considers the anti-secession law to be a unilateral move to change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.

"Rice's comments and deeds will serve as key indicators for the state of the dynamics of the triangular relationship between Washington, Taipei and Beijing and promise to have significant implications for future U.S.-Taiwan relations and the attitudes of other countries toward China as well as for the direction of future adjustments of Washington's policy toward President Chen Shui-bian's administration. .

"Taiwan should continue to make the best use of international leverage to mold its image as a constructive member of the global community of democracies. We, therefore, strongly suggest the Bush administration and Secretary Rice to take into account the objections of the overwhelming majority of the Taiwan people to the PRC 'anti-secession law' and the firm and responsible reaction by President Chen and the DPP administration to Beijing's one-sided attempt to introduce undemocratic and non-peaceful means to sabotage cross-strait peace and undermine Taiwan's democracy.

"We particularly urge Rice to convey three messages to Beijing leaders. First, Rice should insist that it is impermissible to use 'non-peaceful means' or military force of any kind against Taiwan. This message would not only represent the universal value of the peaceful handling of regional disputes or conflicts but also would be consistent with current U.S. policy toward Taiwan and the PRC.

"Besides noting that the anti-secession law is unfortunate and unhelpful to maintaining peace in the Taiwan Strait, Rice should solemnly remind her counterparts in Beijing of the grave consequences embedded in such belligerent and hostile action.

"Washington should clearly delineate its own red line to the Beijing government by noting that the new law trespasses on the scope of the U.S.' own 'Taiwan Relations Act' of 1980 which provides legitimization for the U.S. government to help Taiwan defend itself in case of a military crisis, such as a PRC invasion or other act of war.

"Second, Rice should present Beijing leaders with the content of the U.S. congressional resolutions expressing the grave concern of the U.S. people over the threats posed by the PRC law to peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. Moreover, China's accelerating military build-up, combined with the blank authorization to use force against Taiwan, has not only heightened regional concerns but is also seen as detrimental to world peace.

"Beijing should also be made to clearly understand that

its latest action has reinforced Washington's objections to the proposal for the European Union to lift its 16-year embargo on arms sales to the PRC.

"Finally, and most importantly, Washington should de-link the negative impact of the anti-separation law with its current policy of pursuing a candid, cooperative and constructive relationship with China on issues related to the Korean Peninsula or the Bushian anti-terrorism crusade.

"Taiwan's interests should be safeguarded and not used as a bargaining chip in Washington's policy efforts to engage China.

"While maintaining our restrained but firm stance in dealing with the PRC legislation, the Taiwan government should utilize all of its formal and informal diplomatic resources to enhance awareness in the international community that Beijing is the side which is rocking the boat of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. ."

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